

A Happy Marriage by TheAddict4Dramatics

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Summary:

"You're happy right?" Joyce asked suddenly. She was still looking up at him but was now fixing his gaze in a serious stare. "Right now? Well I'm exhausted but then my wife did just strip naked in front of me and then proceeded to jump me in the shower so yeah I'm pretty happy." - Married Jopper shower fluff because why not?

A Happy Marriage

Author's Note:

Who doesn't love deep, meaningful conversations that take place whilst sober and cuddling in the shower, right?

Happy reading.

Home at last.

The last few hours of his shift had been nothing short of a joke. Endless, mindless, excitement-less reports and issues to sort out. When Hopper had first moved back to Hawkins he had taken the job as Chief of Police because he knew that very little work would be needed and he wasn't in a place where he could have done much actual police work well if it had been required. But nights like this one seemed to mock his assumption that there'd never be anything to do, anything interesting – well monsters and another world aside – no, but not nothing at all either.

And of course late evenings at the station seemed even worse to him now that he had an actual family to come home to. Now that he had a wife and kids that he loved and that he felt like he hadn't seen properly in days. It was all half-finished conversations and quick embraces as they all rushed off to work or school or friends' houses. Hopper was beginning to get a little concerned he would forget what his family looked like if he didn't see them for more than five seconds soon.

But he was home, finally. It was gone eleven o'clock and the house was silent, indicating all residences were asleep, but at least he was home.

He did his usual routine when he came in from a late shift; he switched off the lamps that Joyce had left on for him in the living and then made his way to the kids' bedrooms to check on them. They weren't kids anymore, they were teenagers now, Jonathan a fully-fledged adult but still he did it. Jane and Will were both tucked up

and asleep which frankly with two sixteen year olds was a miracle. Hopper smiled and thought of Jonathan and how he was most certainly not in bed like a good student in New York where he was studying.

He entered his and Joyce's room as quietly as he could. She'd left the lamp on his side of the bed on just as she always did and he was grateful not to have to fumble around in the dark. He knew she had an early shift at the store tomorrow so would have gone to bed when the kids had and not stayed up. He didn't blame her for that of course but it was another day where he'd hardly get to see her.

Hopper stripped down to his underwear and grabbed a clean towel from the side. He was exhausted but the thought of a nice, hot shower was tempting him before he crawled into bed. As he turned to leave he saw Joyce had rolled onto her back and was blinking slowly at him as she gradually came to.

"Hey, you okay?" He whispered as not to startle her.

"Hmmm..." She half said, half yawned in response. "You?"

"Yeah." He wandered over to the bed, bending down to place a kiss on her shoulder. She was wearing an old Rolling Stones t-shirt that she often slept in, his Rolling Stones t-shirt to be exact but it appeared to officially belong to her now and he had no complaints about that. "Go back to sleep sweetheart. I'm going to take a quick shower. I'll try not to wake you when I come back in."

"Okay..." She agreed sleepily. He was sure she wouldn't even remember this exchange come morning. She rolled back onto her side and snuggled down again. He placed one last kiss to her back and he was pretty sure she was already asleep again by the time he left the room.

Hopper had been in the shower approximately two minutes when he heard the bathroom door open and close again. The sound made him startle even over the noise of the running water. The house had been so still and devoid of movement that it surprised him a lot more than it normally would.

"Joy..?" He called out quietly.

He couldn't see through the shower curtain who had come in and he wasn't going to pull it back to check just in case it was one of the kids. Whoever it was didn't answer but instead walked over to the windowsill and turned on the radio that lived there. They turned the volume down low so it was only just audible above the sound of the water and would not disturb anyone else. The soft, mellow music drifted through the room and combined with the hot water made Hopper feel incredibly relaxed – as if all the small, annoying stresses of the day were washing away down the plughole.

Before he could call out again, the shower curtain was pulled back from the outside to reveal his wife looking, well like she had just rolled out of bed, but also a lot more awake than when he had left her a few minutes ago. She stood in front of him in nothing but that Rolling Stones t-shirt and her underwear, taking him in slowly and silently. Hopper couldn't help but smirk in response.

"Can I help you sweetheart?"

Joyce only smirked back. Before stepping out of her panties and pulling the t-shirt over her head so she was as naked as him but still she did not move or say anything. Hopper's smile increased tenfold – his day was certainly about to get a lot better. After a couple of moments of silence in which Hopper was happy to stay still and enjoy the view, Joyce finally raised her hand out for him to take which he did and then helped her step over the side of bath to join him under the shower. Her next move surprised him slightly – instead of reaching out and pulling him down for a searing kiss of passion she simply wrapped her arms around his waist, placed her head on his chest and cuddled into him. There was no passion in the move just a quiet intimacy that had been built up between the two of them over time. Hopper enclosed her into his big arms, leaning down to leave a lingering kiss to the top of her head.

"Everything okay?" He asked. She seemed alright but this wasn't exactly her usual behaviour, jumping him in the shower to cuddle, and he was concerned that something may have happened whilst he'd been held up at work.

"Yeah... I just wanted to see you." Joyce replied simply. Hopper frowned slightly into the top of her head.

"You saw me just a minute ago Joy... and this morning. We live together, remember?" He teased her gently, still holding her tightly in his arms. It was feeling pretty damn good just to hold her and he had no intention of letting go anytime soon. Their water bill might protest slightly though if they made this a regular occurrence.

"You know what I mean. I wanted to see you properly... when one of us isn't rushing to work or running around after the kids. I miss you." She finished so quietly he struggled to hear her despite how close she was. It was almost as if she were embarrassed to admit such a thing. He smiled all the more. He knew exactly what she meant because he felt the same way but it warmed his heart a little to hear she felt it too.

"Well it's certainly nice to be missed." He informed her as he kissed the top of her head again.

They stayed like that for several moments, just enjoying each other's quiet company. Then Joyce moved her head up from his chest to look up him. She gazed up at him silently clearly thinking quite hard about something but was equally clear she was not ready to share what it was yet. Hopper kissed her softly, now that he finally had access to her mouth that had been buried into his chest, and he wiped some of the wet strands of hair further away from her face.

"You're happy right?" Joyce asked suddenly. She was still looking up at him but was now fixing his gaze in a serious stare.

"Right now? Well I'm exhausted but then my wife did just strip naked in front of me and then proceeded to jump me in the shower so yeah I'm pretty happy." He joked and she smiled at his response but then the smile faded and she still looked just as serious.

"No I didn't mean right now I meant generally... you know are you happy in life? In our life together? I mean I know we're busy with work and the kids and there's endless bills and even more endless laundry and chores and all of that but you are happy right?"

"Yeah I'm happy. I'm hugely happy Joy. Why do I not seem it?" Hopper asked her with a frown. He didn't know where any of this was coming from. He had been a bit grumpy the last few days because of their shift patterns never coinciding but that was a fairly common thing. He didn't think anything out of the ordinary had happened that would make her doubt his happiness.

"No it's not that..." She broke eye contact with him for a moment, looking down as she tried to find the right words to express what she was thinking. "I guess I'm just not used to it that's all... having a contented husband... a happy marriage... it's kind of new to me." She mumbled, still not looking at him.

She had no idea why she was comparing him to Lonnie. But in terms of marriages that was her only personal point of reference. And two years into her marriage with Lonnie things were already starting to head south in a major way, even with Jonathan as a baby. But two years into her marriage with Hop and there didn't seem to be any huge, unsolvable cracks appearing and somehow that was scaring her. It was scaring her because she had no point of reference for it – it was uncharted territory and the unknown was a little bewildering.

"Hey..." Hopper placed his hand under her chin and forced her head up to look at him. "I'm not Lonnie." He told her firmly as if he could read her mind and knew exactly what she had just been thinking. And he was right about that, thank god. "And I'm ecstatically fucking happy with you." She laughed a little at his brashness and he smiled at the sound. "And you better get used to it because I'm planning for you to be in a happy marriage for a long time to come, okay?"

"Well if you insist." She teased, reaching up onto her tiptoes to kiss him.

They were still tired; still overworked and underpaid and all of the rest of it that came with family life. But they were happy and considering everything they had all been through Joyce would take that any day of the week.